



LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

Sandra Gioia Treadway
Librarian of Virginia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Aug. 21, 2023

CONTACT: Ann Henderson, Communications Manager
804.692.3611, ann.henderson@lva.virginia.gov

Authors Russ Ford and Todd C. Peppers discuss their book *Crossing the River Styx* on Sept. 14 as part of the Library of Virginia's 2023 Carole Weinstein Author Series

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA – The Library of Virginia's [2023 Carole Weinstein Author Series](#) continues this fall with a talk from authors Russ Ford and Todd C. Peppers on their book *Crossing the River Styx: The Memoir of a Death Row Chaplain*. The free talk will be held on Thursday, Sept. 14 at 6:00 p.m. at the Library of Virginia, 800 East Broad Street, Richmond. A book signing will follow the talk.

Crossing the River Styx: The Memoir of a Death Row Chaplain explores the Rev. Russ Ford's experiences as the head chaplain on Virginia's death row for 18 years. He raged against the inequities of the death penalty—now outlawed in Virginia—while ministering to the men condemned to die in the 1980s and 1990s. Ford stood watch with 28 men, sitting with them in the squalid death house during the final days and hours of their lives. Many chaplains get to know the condemned men only in their final moments. Ford, however, spent years forging close bonds with the condemned and developing a nuanced understanding of their crimes, their early struggles and their challenges behind bars. His unusual ministry makes this memoir a unique and compelling read, a moving and unflinching portrait of Virginia's death row inmates.

Russ Ford is a retired chaplain. **Todd C. Peppers** is the Henry H. and Trudye H. Fowler Professor of Public Affairs at Roanoke College and a visiting professor of law at Washington and Lee University. In addition to his current work, Peppers has co-authored two other books on the death penalty: *Anatomy of an Execution: The Life and Death of Douglas Christopher Thomas* and *A Courageous Fool: Marie Deans and Her Struggle Against the Death Penalty*.

The Carole Weinstein Author Series supports the literary arts by bringing both new and well-known authors to the Library of Virginia. Free and open to the public, the series focuses on Virginia authors and Virginia subjects across all genres and is made possible through support from the Carole Weinstein Endowment for Virginia Authors. This year marks the Library's 200th anniversary, a special occasion for spotlighting the Library's role in bringing attention to talented Virginia writers and fascinating Virginia subjects.

To see the series schedule and register for events, visit www.lva.virginia.gov/public/weinstein. For more information, contact Catherine Fitzgerald Wyatt at catherine.fitzgeraldwyatt@lva.virginia.gov or 804.692.3999.

Find related images here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ctc80kekuwgag92/AABLjWRNrMsvi7qMZDOx8kpCa?dl=0>

###

ABOUT THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

The Library of Virginia is the state's oldest institution dedicated to the preservation of Virginia's history and culture. Our online offerings attract nearly 4 million website visits per year, and our resources, exhibitions and events bring in nearly 100,000 visitors each year. The Library's collections, containing more than 130 million items, document and illustrate the lives of both famous Virginians and ordinary citizens. The Library is located in downtown Richmond near Capitol Square at 800 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219. Learn more at www.lva.virginia.gov.